3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[10] Mårten Stenberger[11] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boëthius[12] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands.

A glance at the literary material.

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[13]

In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *falla: fuara*, as in the stone-built *clocháns*, but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin*, and of *fraigh, i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[14] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[15] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion.

O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 100.
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.

Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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pre-Gaelic tongues, and there can be little doubt that the eel fishery is prehistoric in origin. The draft nets in which pollan are caught in the lake—the pollan is a fresh-water herring peculiar to some Irish and Scottish lakes—also display old features. The sections, known as webs, are sewn together with a bone needle into long nets, which are weighted with stone sinkers. The draft-net is widely used in the salmon rivers, as described on the Boyne earlier in this chapter, and references to draft-netting go back to the twelfth century. On some rivers tall towers are erected from which a watcher signals the presence of fish.[1]

We are not here concerned with the commercial offshore fisheries, but something must be said of the inshore fishing because it has been characteristically combined with farming all around the coast. This type of fishing was well suited to the Irish crofter economy, so that the comment frequently made by improving visitors and despairing Government officials was that the Irish would not go out to fish, but waited for the fish to come close inshore. The shore-dwelling farmer is knowledgeable about the ways of fish and knows all 'the signs'. He has been accustomed to keep a net to hand and watch for shoals of different fish at the right seasons. There are watching points on the cliffs overlooking many a small bay, and it was from such vantage points on the south and west coasts that the pilchard 'huers' directed the seine boats to the shoals that visit Ireland intermittently.[2] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Irish pilchard fishery grew to large proportions but it has now declined to something like its older local significance. When the industry was capitalized by promoters like Sir William Petty it was the train oil pressed out during the packing of the pilchards for export which found an Irish market. It was used both as a luminant and in the preparation of leather. The seine boats have now turned their attention to herring and mackerel, and Dr. Went has pointed out that the seine is used for catching salmon only in Kenmare Bay, where Petty introduced it for pilchard fishing about the year 1672.

In the Irish Sea the herrings come close inshore in September

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 86 (1956), 29–33, Pl. 5a.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 51 (1946), 157–67.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor, just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use in matters pertaining to the service during the prescribed hours. When the freighter ran aground before dawn, it was discovered by islanders who informed the company; Radio Eireann reported the plight of the vessel, on the basis of S.O.S. messages, in the seven o'clock news, but the company had reached the reef before the telephone was available.

Inis Beag has only a small church, known as the "chapel." After the church of the patron saint was abandoned, a house served as the place of worship for a time, then was superseded by the old chapel whose foundations can be discerned